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OO RUEHBI RUEHLMC
DE RUEHLM #1023 2041324
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6487
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0298
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7282
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5391
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3923
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1214
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 3992
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 1178
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3078
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 7874
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5528
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0328
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2220
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001023

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS AND PM
MCC FOR D NASSIRY AND E BURKE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/23/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: POLICE FORCES KILL TAMIL TIGER LEADER
IN AMPARA; DEFUSE BOMB

REF: COLOMBO 1003

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James R. Moore, for reasons 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (SBU) Elite Sri Lankan police officers known as Special Task Forces (STF) killed six Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) cadres on Saturday, July 21, including the Ampara area leader known as Ravindran, recovering a cache of weapons and ammunition. The STF reported that its raid was in retaliation for an LTTE attack on them in Ampara. Media sources speculated, however, that the assassination of Ravindran was in retaliation for the LTTE's assassination of Chief Secretary of the Eastern Provincial Council H.M. Herath Abeyweera on July 16 (ref A).

¶2. (SBU) On the western side of Sri Lanka in Mulikkulum near Mannar, the LTTE claimed to have repelled a two-pronged attack by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA), inflicting heavy casualties on the military, while losing five Tiger cadres in the battle. However, the SLA denied launching an offensive in Mannar, instead insisting that it was a "quiet" weekend with only brief mortar exchange for four hours on Sunday, July 22, resulting in no SLA casualties.

¶3. (SBU) In Colombo, police forces found and defused an eight-kilogram claymore mine in a vegetable market only minutes before it was set to detonate. This was the third time in a month that police forces have been able to find a bomb shortly before it exploded. The mine was discovered after an anonymous tip and was located less than three kilometers from a rally held by President Rajapaksa. As a result of the President's presence at the rally, the area was heavily guarded by SLA and STF troops who were able quickly to deploy an STF bomb specialist. In response to questions concerning who was responsible for the mine, military spokesman Prasad Samarasinghe said, "Obviously, it was the LTTE. They are getting desperate and want to kill as

many people as possible." The LTTE has not commented on the matter.

¶4. (C) Some commentators expressed skepticism about the STF's uncanny ability to find and defuse mines just before detonation based on anonymous tips. They also point out that this would represent a major departure from the Tigers' policy in recent months to avoid attacks against purely civilian targets of limited economic significance.

MOORE